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THE MUSICAL TIMES,

And Singing Class Circular.

JULY 1st, 1848.

COMMEMORATION OF PURCELL.

ON Thursday the choral cathedral service was revived in its splendour at Westminster Abbey, in honour of Henry Purcell, on which occasion an entire morning service of his composition was performed, including three anthems. The *Te Deum* in B flat, the *Jubilate* belonging to the orchestral *Te Deum* in D, the anthems "Out of the deep," "O give thanks," and another for eight voices (the title of which has escaped us), composed the music. This eight-voice anthem was, perhaps, the only thing which did not thoroughly satisfy in the performance; the rest of the music was full of beauties. The style of the responses, the chanting, accompanied with an exquisite variety of effects by Mr. Turle, the solos sung by Machin, Hobbs, Lockey, &c., the full and fine combination of the choir with the judicious contrasts of the organ, which answers its object as an accompanying instrument most perfectly, altogether raised the cathedral service to a dignity and beauty which it never yet reached in our experience. The alterations in the Abbey—the removal of the wainscot partitions between the choir and Poet's-corner, are all greatly in favor of music, and make the minutest sounds tell. Then the organ. It is absolutely impossible to make a noise with so beautiful an instrument. When the whole of the stops, trumpets, and all, are drawn, the effect is only what Shakspeare calls "sweet thunder." Now that this organ is thoroughly tuned and rendered smooth, it surpasses in volume and combination anything that we ever heard. No foreign organ can vie with it in weight and richness of quality—though that in the Royal Catholic Church at Dresden certainly speaks a more well-defined C of 32 feet. For the accompanying of voices, however, this instrument is admirably designed—from the minutest and most delicate tones of the diapasons in the swell, to its grandest combination, it forms one immense engine of perpetual variety. Mr. Turle employed it with the greatest taste and address; without overdoing

his part—interfering with or covering the choir, he found an opportunity to let all the finest effects of his instrument be heard, and a noble illustration of Purcell it afforded. Such majestic and extraordinary tones might almost have drawn the mighty master from his tomb. We seemed to realise his presence as the soft sounds of the cathedral clock mingled with the anthem, and the sun light fell on the columns of the choir. Sounds and sights like these must have been the familiar things of the life of Purcell, and by the aid of sympathy and the strong vitality of his music, the composer may again be conjured into existence.

But what we remark with the greatest pleasure is the strong and growing passion of the public for his works. The immense crowd of hearers which filled all the open avenues of the cathedral, exhibiting the deepest interest in the music, afforded testimony to the progress of a composer who has not yet assumed his true position. The latest in this respect is always the greatest. Every year's experience tends to shew that Handel must ultimately make way for Purcell, and that the German history of vocal music, sacred and secular, needs certain corrections in favour of England. Meanwhile we may thank the Purcell Society for their efforts in behalf of early English art, in declamation, in expression, in melody and counterpoint. Nor must Mr. Vincent Novello, who arranged the whole of Purcell's church music, be overlooked in the list of those to whose enthusiasm English art is indebted. Great things have been done in the present century for Purcell, in the preservation of works that would probably have been lost beyond recovery. The next thing is to preserve the tradition of his style by stated performances. As for the musical public, they are well disposed in this respect, and ready to be led wherever experience and taste may guide.

CONCERT OF MR. HULLAH'S PUPILS.—EXETER HALL.

The last concert on Wednesday evening was the most successful that we have attended. The selection was miscellaneous, containing, besides choruses and part songs, songs accompanied on the pianoforte, by the orchestra, and by a chorus. Great enthusiasm prevailed among the audience, who were disposed to encore everything, and the cheerful mood inspired by the music, looks well for the prosperity of Mr. Hullah's future undertakings.